



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Law and Order Committee recommends Malcolm Begay for permanent appointment as District Court Judge**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Wednesday, the Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0129-17, recommending the permanent appointment of Malcolm Begay as a Navajo Nation District Court Judge. Begay currently serves as a probationary judge for the Kayenta District Court.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), who sponsored the legislation, stated that the permanent appointment is greatly needed due to the lack of judges within the Navajo courts.

“Begay was recommended by Acting Chief Justice Allen Sloan to be appointed permanently. The appointment will also fill one of the many vacant judge positions. Begay has met all the qualifications to be considered for appointment,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

According to a letter dated March 3, 2017 from Acting Chief Justice Sloan, he recommended Begay’s permanent appointment as a district court judge after completing a two-year probationary period. As a sitting probationary judge, Begay achieved two conditions that are required for the appointment including completing a prescribed course of training for probationary judges and completing a probationary performance evaluation, which found his performance to be more than satisfactory, added Sloan.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) raised a concern regarding Begay’s level of knowledge of the Navajo language, which was included in the probationary performance evaluation.

“Based on the evaluation, I noticed that Begay is not fluent in Navajo. It is important to comprehend the Navajo language within the court setting because there are elders that do not understand or speak English. A Navajo interpreter should be present within the courtroom to ensure statements by the people are comprehended correctly,” stated Delegate Begay.

Delegate Yazzie stated that the performance evaluation was rated as satisfactory and that Begay meets all the qualifications to be a district judge.

The Law and Order approved Legislation No. 0129-17 with a 2-0 vote. The recommendation will be sent to President Russell Begaye for consideration. If President Begaye issues a permanent

appointment, Malcolm Begay's appointment will be subject to confirmation by the Navajo Nation Council.

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